The Wadsworth Diaries

1857 - 1893

Volume Four — 1888 through 1893

Photo Courtesy of
Peggy (Young) Marguerite
Great, Great Granddaughter of Abbie Wadsworth

The Diaries of George M. Wadsworth

1857 - 1893

Volume Four – 1889 through 1893

Compiled, Transcribed and Annotated

by

Gail V. Lembo

and

Donated to the people of the Town of Franklin

through The Franklin Town Library

and The Friends of the Franklin Library

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Introduction to Volume IV

Welcome to Volume IV of "*The Wadsworth Diaries,*" which traces the almost daily happenings of George Wadsworth and his family from1889 through 1893. This marks the final volume in the collection, created by Gail Lembo, from diaries purchased at a yard sale in Franklin, Mass., in 1991.

It was in 1857, when George Wadsworth, then 20-years old, took pen in hand and began his diary. Volume I documents his entries from 1857-1863, giving the reader a sense of what life was like in Wadsworth Village. In Volume II, his entries date from 1866-1871. In volume III, George records happenings in 1881, and skips to 1884, faithful to jotting entries through 1888. No diaries were found for 1872 –1880, or for 1882 and 1883.

George's gift to us is a first-hand account of daily life in Franklin more than 100 years ago. The diaries tell the tale of a hard-working, close-knit family. George kept his eye on the weather in concern for his crops. He also kept up with news in the community and the country. He did his civic duty, attending town meetings and noting his votes in the national elections.

As the reader plows through the monotony of his daily entries, he or she is often rewarded with a spark of national or local history. Photos, genealogical charts, grocery lists, order sheets, newspaper accounts and more, all gathered through Mrs. Lembo's efforts, enhance each of the four volumes of the George Wadsworth Diaries.

Historians, 100 years from now, will have it much easier. Instead of having to face the challenge of deciphering George's penmanship, the reader will have the benefit of computer-generated copy, enhanced by the many items that time-consuming research has generated.

George's Uncle Nathan, who was bedridden and lived downstairs from George, died March 19, 1889. Franklin's vital statistics list his death from senile debility at age 90. This volume documents two separate petitions, one from Mrs. Hespie (Tilton) Metcalf, claiming to be Uncle Nathan's "wife and only next of kin," and the other from Joseph H. Wadsworth and Stephen Richardson, both of Franklin, and Alvah Metcalf of Ashland, claiming to be "his only heirs at law and next of kin." Someone crossed out "leaving a widow" in the court document.

An entry on January 8, 1889 in George's diary, notes: -"Uncle Nathan, 89, married Mrs. Hespie Tilton." On June 26, 1889, the court ruled in favor of Hepsie N. (Tilton) Metcalf.

On March 15, 1891, George notes that the luxurious White Train, known as the Ghost Train, passed through Franklin. A story about "The Ghost Train," by Francis D. Donovan of Medway, follows the entry, and a photo of the train is included.

One of the historical glimpses woven in among the entries about George's relatives and their births, marriages, sicknesses and deaths, is that on November 8, 1892, George voted for Harrison "and the rest of the Republican ticket."

George traveled to Chicago to attend the world's Fair in 1893, arriving September 22. He took notes, or took his diary with him, because he recorded for September 20 and 21, where he dined and his time of arrival in states along the way.

Sadly from December 26, 1893 to February 9, 1984, George's notes record unhappy times: Willie, son of George's brother, Joseph, was ill; Uncle Richardson had his eye removed; Willie, Joseph's only son, died in George's arms.

On January 24, 25 and February 23, 1894, George traveled to the eye & Ear Infirmary in Boston. He mentioned a sore on his ear, and there must have been eye problems. In the Woonsocket Evening Call of November 26, 1906, the story refers to George Wadsworth's blindness. The report was on the fire that leveled Wadsworth Village in Franklin.

Gail Lembo's gift to future historians is a well-documented account of life in Franklin more than a century ago. She has enhanced George's daily jottings with a list of historical occurrences that occurred in each of the years featured in the diaries.

When was the first long-distance phone call made from Boston to New York? When did Dr. James Naismith get bored students in Springfield, Mass., to toss balls through baskets, creating the game of basketball? Speaking of Springfield, a gasoline-powered motorcar made its first successful run there in 1892. Who were the inventors? Volume IV will answer those questions and more.

Special Thanks
To
Anne King
of Franklin
for the
introduction to Volume IV,

Francis Donovan
of Medway for
The Ghost Train,

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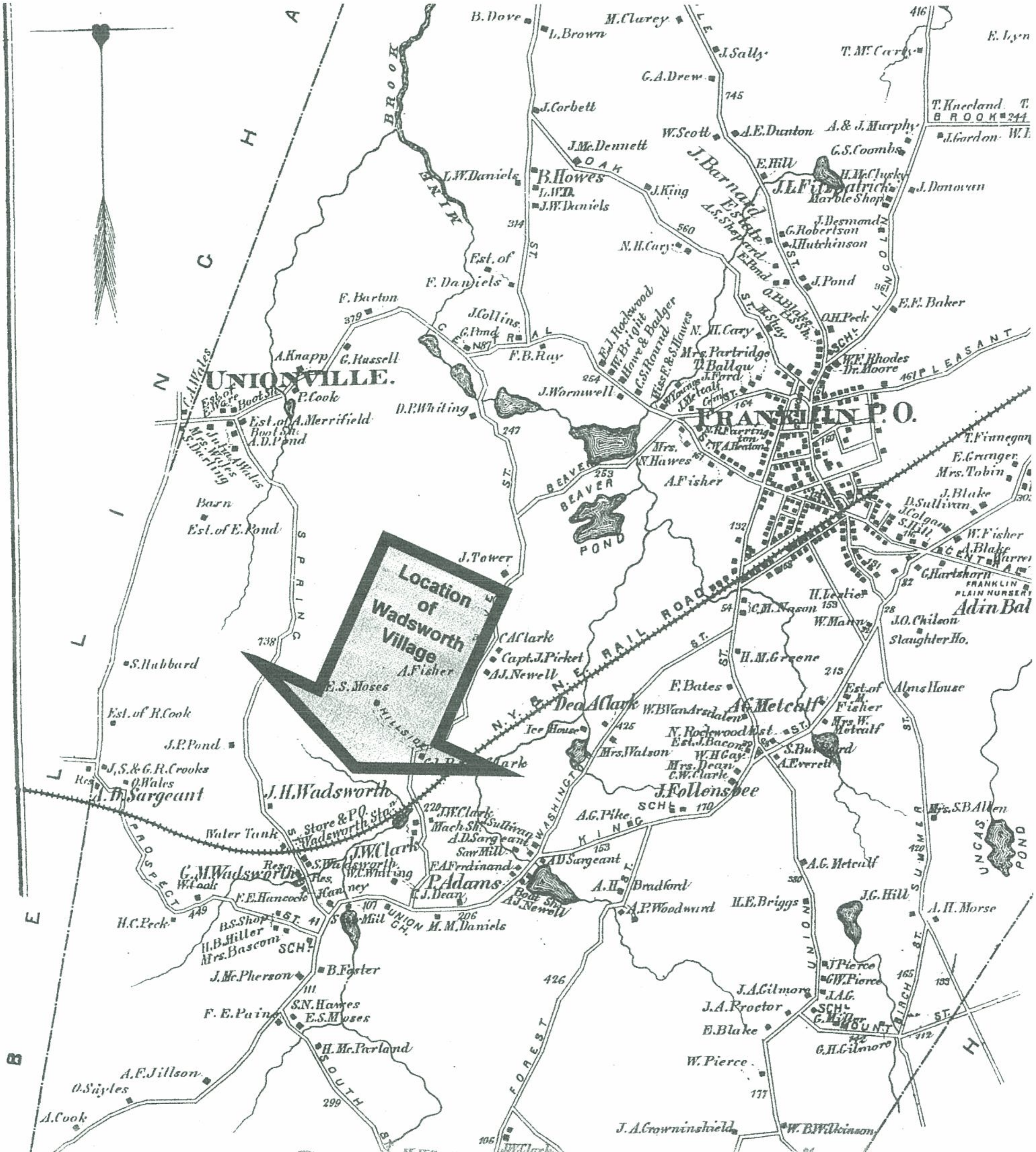
of Franklin
for the
many archival pictures

and

Theresa Robbins
of Franklin
for her very special help.



SOUTHWEST PORTION OF THE

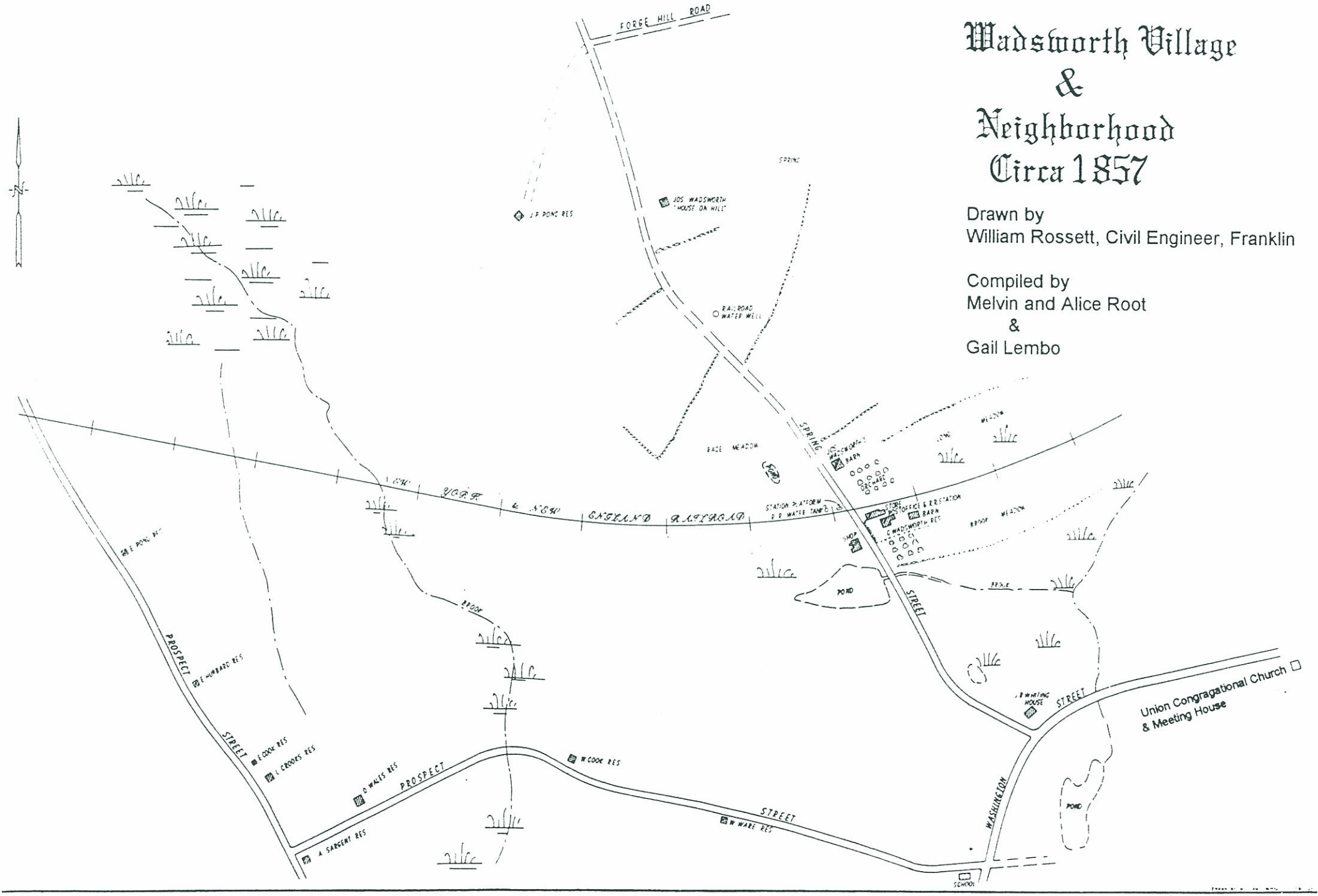
1887 Map of Franklin

Copy of Map obtained from Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

Wadsworth Village & Neighborhood Circa 1857

Drawn by
William Rossett, Civil Engineer, Franklin

Compiled by
Melvin and Alice Root
&
Gail Lembo



ELMER ABBIE EVA EMMA GEORGE NETTIE
(Joseph's wife) (Abbie Jenette)

Photograph Courtesy of
Peggy (Young) Marguerite of Franklin
Great Granddaughter of Emma A. Wadsworth
and Great, Great Granddaughter of Abbie Wadsworth

Computer enhanced photo of
Abbie Wadsworth, Joseph's wife and Emeline Wadsworth, George's wife

Original photo below courtesy of Peggy (Young) Marguerite

Elmer M. Wadsworth, circa 1900

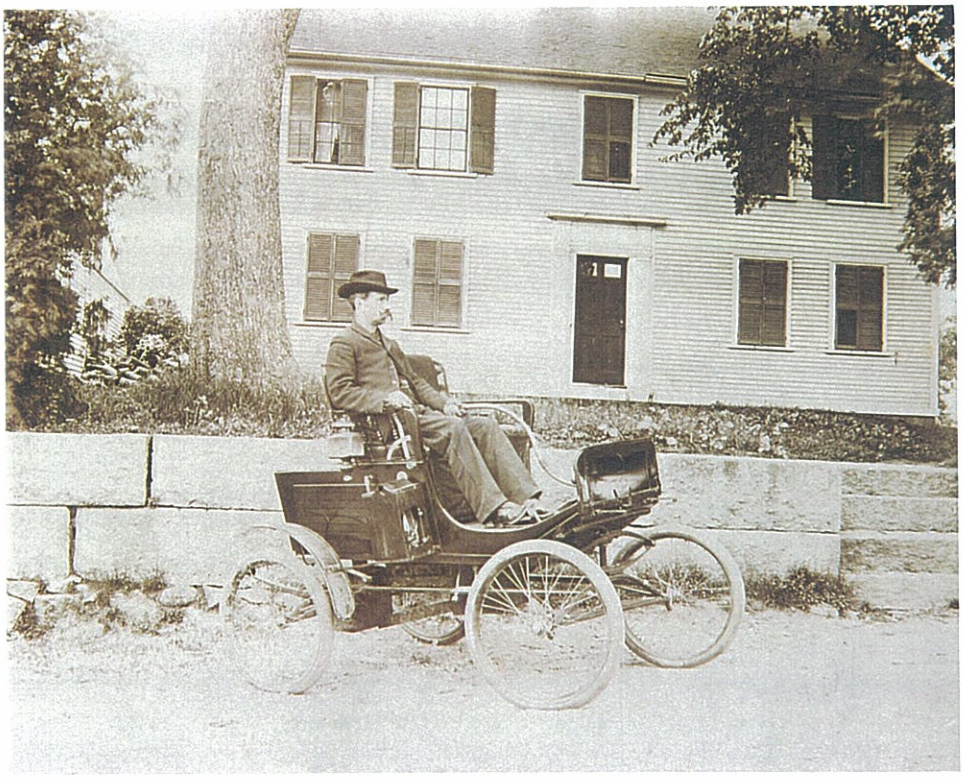


Photo Courtesy of
Melvin and Alice Root

Enlarged version of Elmer Wadsworth's calling card found in the Wadsworth Collection

OFFICE OF SEATTLE SOAP CO.

Our MR. A. C. WADSWORTH *will call on you about the* 1893 *with a full line of all kinds of SOAP.*

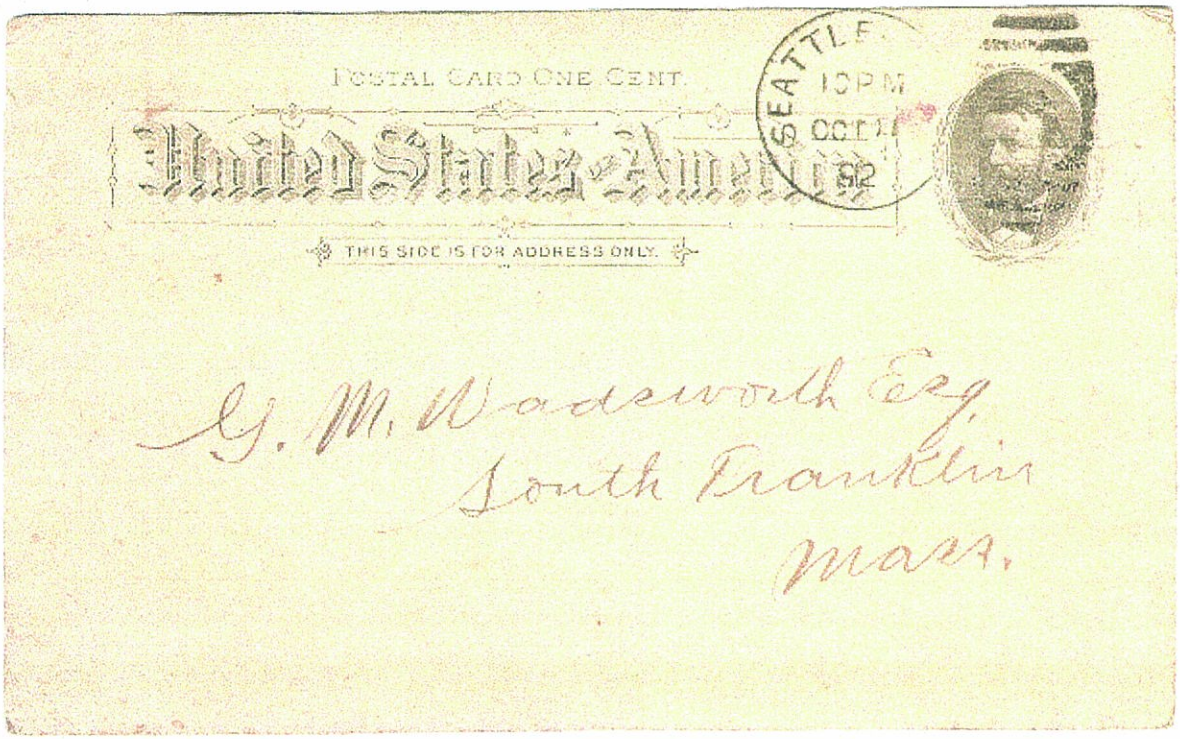
Kindly reserve your orders for him and oblige

Seattle Soap Co.

Our Brands.

SOPO (Washing Powder)
BLANCHO
WATER WITCH
WESTERN QUEEN
GEM
SAVON
HOUSEHOLD SAVON
GOLD BAR
Long Bar Laundry
LONDON TOILET
MILLED TOILETS, all kinds
BORAX
KITCHEN GEM
FINEST CASTILE
ELECTRIC
INDIGO
FRENCH LUSTRAL
MARINE OR SALTWATER
MOTTLED CASTILE
CLIMAX
Also a

FULL LINE OF LAUNDRY SUPPLIES



POSTAL CARD ONE CENT.

United States America

THIS SIDE IS FOR ADDRESS ONLY.

SEATTLE 10 PM OCT 11 92

G. M. Wadsworth Esq
South Franklin
Mass.

Alvah Wadsworth sent this postcard to his father on October 11, 1892

Children of George M. Wadsworth

George M. Wadsworth
1836 - 1907
Age at birth of first child: 26
Age at birth of last child: 31
Age at death: 71

Emeline M. Metcalf
1841 - 1882
Married: May 26, 1861
in Franklin
Age at birth of first child: 21
Age at birth of last child: 26
Age at death: 41

Children

Elmer M. Wadsworth
1862 - 1917
Age at death: 54

Alvah Chapman Wadsworth
1867 -

Abigale (?) No Children

Descendants of Joseph H. Wadsworth

Joseph H. Wadsworth
1826 - 1890
Age at death: 64

Abbie L. (Metcalf)
1835 - 1923
Married: September 10, 1857
in Franklin
Age at death: 88

Children

Abbie Jeanette (Nettie) Wadsworth
1858 -

John W. Clewley
Married: June 01, 1892
in Providence, Rhode Island

Frank J. Wadsworth
1861 - 1863
Age at death: 2

Emma A. Wadsworth
1864 - 1943
Age at death: 78

William A. (Dick) Young
Married: November 24, 1892
in Franklin

Willie
1866 - 1894
Age at death: 27

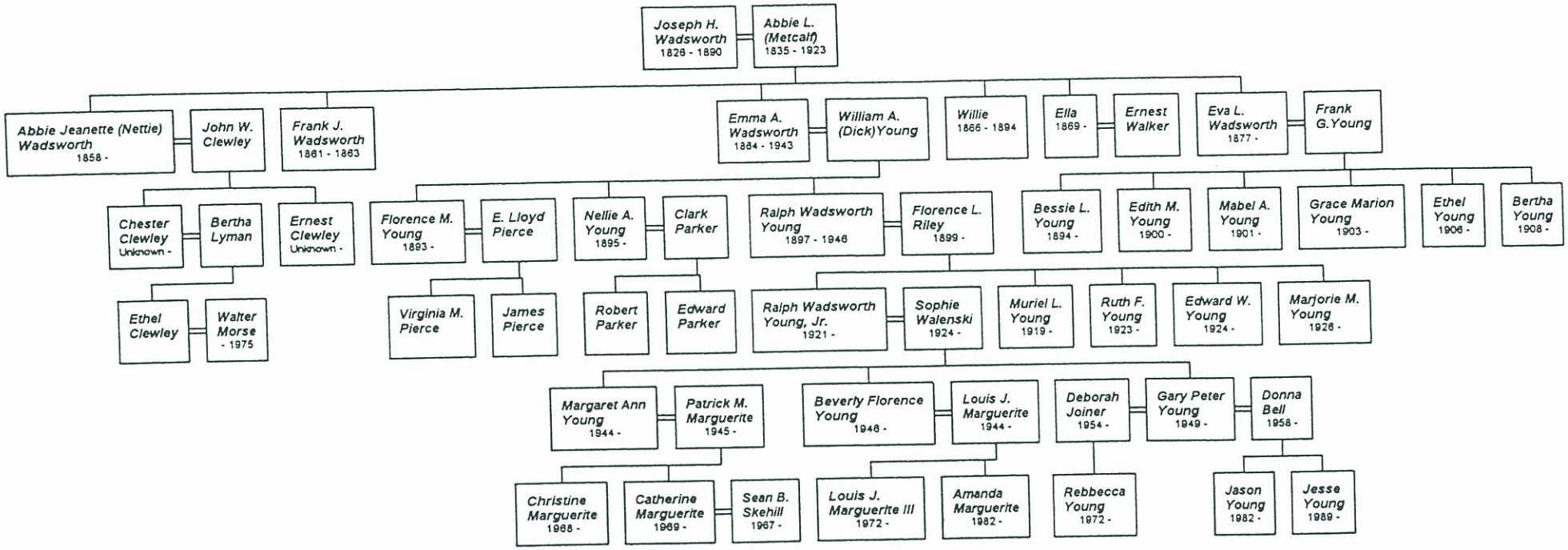
Ella
1869 -

Ernest Walker
Married: May 04, 1895

Eva L. Wadsworth
1877 -

Frank G. Young
Married: January 10, 1894
in Franklin

Descendants of Joseph H. Wadsworth



Compiled by Gail V. Lembo
With thanks to
Peggy Marguerite
Ethel Morse
Ruth Chelotti
Muriel Taylor